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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/46/L.54)]

46/219. Operational activities of the United Nations system

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the continuing validity of its resolutions 2688 (XXV) of 11 December 1970, 3362 (S-VII) of 16 September 1975, 32/197 of 20 December 1977, 42/196 of 11 December 1987, 44/211 of 22 December 1989, S-18/3 of 1 May 1990 and 45/199 of 21 December 1990,

Emphasizing the importance of strengthening the operational activities for development of the United Nations system in accordance with the above-mentioned resolutions,

Reaffirming that the fundamental characteristics of the operational activities of the United Nations system should be, inter alia, their universality, their voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality and multilateralism, and their ability to respond to the needs and concerns of the developing countries, at their request and in accordance with their development plans, priorities and objectives,

Noting with concern that progress in implementing parts of its resolution 44/211 has been disappointing and stressing the need for more vigorous efforts to implement the resolution in areas in which the implementation has been unsatisfactory,

Recognizing the need to give guidance to the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation in the preparation of the report for the next triennial policy review of operational activities,

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1. Takes note of the report of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation on operational activities of the United Nations system; 1/

2. Reaffirms the importance of its resolution 44/211 and the need for coordinated and full implementation of the resolution by the relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, taking into account the interrelationships among issues;

3. Also reaffirms the principal responsibility of Governments in managing programmes and projects supported by the United Nations system;

4. Takes note of decision 91/32 on support costs successor arrangements, adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme on 25 June 1991; 2/

5. Calls upon the international community, in particular donor countries, for a real and significant increase in resources for operational activities for development on a continuous, predictable and assured basis and urges all countries to increase their voluntary contributions for operational activities for development;

6. Urges developed countries, in particular those countries whose overall performance is not commensurate with their capacity, taking into account established official development assistance targets, including targets established at the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries 3/ and present levels of contribution, to substantially increase their official development assistance, including contributions to the operational activities of the United Nations system;

7. Takes note of decision 91/27 on national execution, adopted by the Governing Council of the Programme on 21 June 1991; 2/

8. Stresses that the national execution modality should be the norm for programmes and projects funded by the United Nations system, taking into account the needs and capacities of developing countries;

9. Also stresses the principal responsibility of developing countries in determining their capacity to execute programmes and projects funded by the United Nations system;

10. Calls upon the United Nations system to simplify the rules and procedures for national execution within the framework of enhanced accountability, particularly in order to minimize the administrative burden of Governments and the costs of managing projects and programmes;

1/ A/46/206-E/1991/93 and Add.1-4.

2/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1991, Supplement No. 13 (E/1991/34), annex I.

3/ See A/CONF.147/18.

11. Also calls upon the organizations of the United Nations system to intensify their efforts to assist developing countries, at their request, in developing their multisectoral, sectoral and subsectoral strategies, which should provide a framework for coordinated and coherent programming, and stresses the need to enhance the coherence of the response of the United Nations system to these strategies;

12. Reaffirms the continued validity of the resident coordinator system as detailed in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and the urgent need to strengthen the effectiveness of the resident coordinator system;

13. Also reaffirms the need to improve cooperation between individual agencies at the field level;

14. Calls upon the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to utilize existing capacities to enhance the participation of nationals in projects and programmes;

15. Welcomes the proposal of the Director-General to undertake a feasibility study on a coordinated strategy of training for United Nations staff members and national officials involved in operational activities and requests him to submit the study, with his recommendations, to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session;

16. Urges the agencies of the United Nations system to continue and expand, within existing resources, their joint training programmes for United Nations country teams and urges that these programmes be expanded to the country level and include Government officials;

17. Reaffirms the importance of the triennial policy review of operational activities to be undertaken by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, which should build on and, where necessary, elaborate further the elements of its resolution 44/211;

18. Requests the Director-General to include in his triennial policy review a report on the implementation of resolution 44/211 and recommendations on programming with particular emphasis on the following:

(a) The harmonization and adaptation of the programme cycles of all funding agencies of the United Nations system to the planning periods of national Governments, and further consideration to the introduction of budgetary cycles on a rolling-cycle basis;

(b) The simplification of procedures relating to project formulation, appraisals, monitoring and evaluation, taking into account the need to focus on the impact and sustainability of projects and programmes;

(c) The improvement of programme evaluation and management audit systems, including the need for impact evaluation, with a view to assessing the efficiency, impact and sustainability of projects and programmes;

19. Requests the Director-General to include in his report for the triennial policy review a further analysis of the concept of and recommendations on the integrated operational response of the United Nations system;

20. Also requests the Director-General to include in his report, in consultation with recipient Governments and donors, an assessment and analysis of the progress made in the shift from a project to a programme approach, bearing in mind, inter alia, the work being carried out by the United Nations Development Programme in this regard;

21. Further requests the Director-General to include in his report measures already taken on and proposals for decentralization of capacity and authority to the country level, including budgetary flexibility and rationalization of functions between headquarters and field offices, combined with enhanced accountability, taking into account, inter alia, negotiations and decisions relating to the project cycle, procurement of equipment, provision of training and recruitment of personnel;

22. Requests the Director-General to include in his report, in consultation with recipient Governments and donors, an analysis of the progress made on and recommendations to promote further national execution, taking into account, in particular:

(a) Experience in utilizing national capacities and ways of promoting national participation in projects and programmes so as to maximize national capacity-building and to meet country-specific needs;

(b) Identification of systemic and institutional obstacles and disincentives in the operational activities for development of the United Nations system which impede the full implementation of national execution;

(c) Harmonization and simplification of procedures, aiming at a higher degree of transparency, and their adaptation to the needs of the developing countries;

(d) Improving accountability through training and development in national monitoring capacity, as well as in auditing and financial reporting;

(e) Ways of reorienting the technical capacity of the United Nations system to meet the needs identified by the developing countries, including measures in the areas of policy, technical support and the provision of information, including access to databases of the United Nations system;

23. Also requests the Director-General to include in his report recommendations to strengthen the field representation of the United Nations system, with particular emphasis on the following:

(a) The team leadership role of the resident coordinator, including an assessment of the impact of the existing set of guidelines and recommendations for the strengthening of this role;

(b) The development of the capacity of the United Nations system at the country level to provide technical and substantive support to developing countries, inter alia through the establishment of multidisciplinary teams to meet country-specific needs;

24. Stresses, in the context of the triennial review, the need for a well-defined but flexible management process to guide the implementation of key measures in enhancing the effectiveness of operational activities;

25. Requests the Director-General to include in his report an assessment of progress made in achieving common premises and to propose a plan for the full achievement of this objective, where feasible and appropriate and without any additional costs to developing countries;

26. Also requests the Director-General to include in his report an assessment of and appropriate recommendations on the contribution of the operational activities of the United Nations system to the enhancement of national capacities of developing countries in the field of science and technology;

27. Reaffirms the importance of human development and requests the Director-General to include in his report an assessment of and appropriate recommendations for strengthening the support given by the operational activities of the United Nations system, at the request of developing countries, to sectors vital for human development;

28. Further requests the Director-General to include in his updated statistical report innovative and concrete recommendations to increase substantially procurement from developing countries, paying due respect to the principles of international competitive bidding while acknowledging the commitment to procurement from underutilized major donor countries in accordance with the principles of international competitive bidding, taking into account the standardization and compatibility needs of developing countries;

29. Requests the Secretary-General to make available to the Office of the Director-General the necessary resources, within the overall level for the biennium 1992-1993, to enable it to discharge its responsibilities in the implementation of the present resolution and resolution 44/211;

30. Requests the executive heads of United Nations organs, organizations and bodies to cooperate fully with the Director-General and provide him with all necessary assistance, including secondment on a non-reimbursable basis, to enable him to prepare an action-oriented report.

79th plenary meeting
20 December 1991